

Northern Command Aircraft Mission Summary for California Fires

Spotlight On

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United States Northern Command aircraft continue battling the California wildland fires. All eight of the Department of Defense's C-130 aircraft equipped with the Modular Airborne Firefighting System, or MAFFS, and six helicopters (two CH-46s and four CH-53s) with fire suppression buckets are supporting the effort.

A mission summary of activity through Oct. 29 follows:



A MAFFS (Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System) equipped C-130E aircraft from the 146th Airlift Wing, Channel Islands Air National Guard Station, makes a Phoschek fire retardant drop on the Simi Fire in Southern California.

Photo credit: Staff Sgt. Alex Koenig, 146th Airlift Wing

The MAFFS is a modular unit, designed to be inserted into a C-130 aircraft. Each MAFFS unit is capable of carrying approximately 3,000 gallons of fire retardant. When discharged from about 200 feet above the tree lines the system is capable of covering an area of about 60 feet wide and one-quarter mile in length in approximately 10-11 seconds.

While homeland defense is the primary mission of the command established as a result of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, U.S. Northern Command also provides "one-stop shopping" for military assistance to civil authorities in the event of disaster relief operations to include wildland fires.